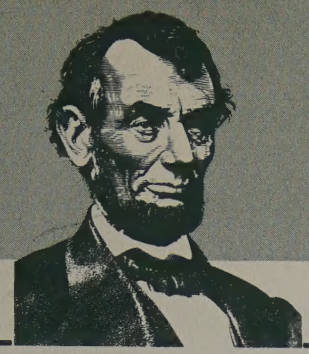


# Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
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## *"Viva La Bagatella"*
## LIVES OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Editors Note: The *Cleveland Weekly Plain Dealer* of August 1, 1860 injected some humor into the Presidential Campaign of 1860. This pro-Douglas Democratic paper carried on its masthead the following slogan: "We Join Ourselves To No Party That Does Not Carry The Flag And Keep To The Music Of The Union." While their news stories and editorial comments were all slanted toward the Douglas-Johnson ticket the editors provided their readers, then and now, with a delightful bit of whimsey in their crowded four page newspaper that sold as a single copy for one dollar and fifty cents with terms "Invariably in Advance."

The New York *Mercury* under the head of "Our Great Biographical Enterprise," thus takes the lives of the different presidential candidates now before the people for their suffrages. Members of all parties can find something to laugh at in some of them; "cuacun a son gout."

### LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
**By one who knows Him**

The subject of our biography was born at Bunker Hill, on the 4th of July, 1776, and was one of the original signers of the precious document which sealed our liberties on that day. We refer to the Declaration of Independence. His father's name was Mr. Lincoln, his mother's, Mrs. Lincoln, and if he had any sisters, they were known as Misses Lincoln. At the age of two years he commenced splitting rails for a living, singing beautiful hymns while so engaged, and displayed all those noble virtues for which he was so distinguished. When he was about ten years old, Boston suddenly became the hub of the world, and required so much greasing that cleanly people were obliged to move away. The Lincolns went to Illinois, where Abraham became the ablest lawyer in the State in less than a week, and learned to chew tobacco. His reputation for eloquence was unparalleled, and, as a specimen of his wit we give the following;

### ANECDOTE

On one occasion Mr. Lincoln was splitting a rail in the parlor of Judge Douglas' residence, when the latter joined him, and thinking to make a joke about our hero's extreme leanness, remarked:

"Why, Abe, you are a rail yourself."

Mr. Lincoln looked up from his work with that sublime glare which has often petrified a world, and gravely responded:

"You, sir, are the reverse of a rail?"

Douglas immediately grasped his hat and carpet bag, went to Washington, and asked the President to explain what Lincoln meant by that.

"Why," replied the President, "the reverse of rail is liar spelled backwards."

Since then, Douglas and Lincoln have been warm friends.

The subject of our biography was defeated by Mr. Douglas for the United States Senate, in 1854, on account of sickness in his family, and has since been known as "Honest Old Abe" to the whole country. He is a man of unflinching integrity, and though he chews tobacco at present, will not choose the Weed for a companion if elected President.

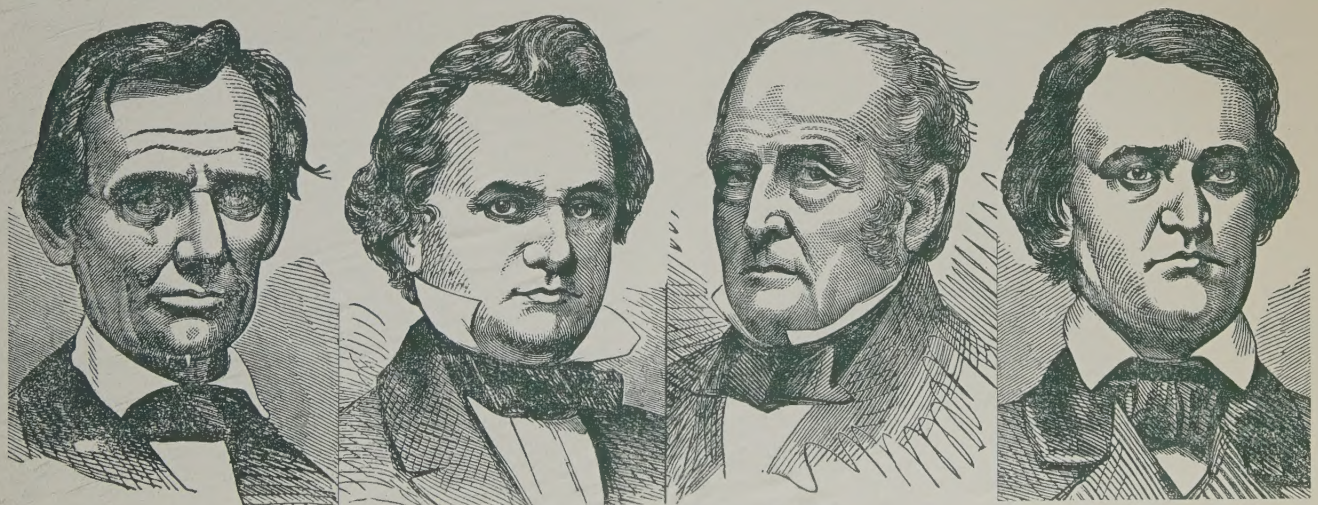
N.B.—The Author of this biography died immediately after penning the above work.

### LIFE OF STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS
**By one who has known him since he was so high**

Mr. Douglas was born at Bennington, Vermont, on the 4th of July, 1776, and demonstrated the utility of squatter sovereignty before he threw off his crinoline. His parents belonged to a noble Scotch family, and when Stephen was two years old, they emigrated with him to Illinois. It was during this journey that he gave vent to a remark which has since became classical. His father asked him if he would have an apple; and on receiving an answer in the affirmative, made a "split" in it, preparatory to dividing it into two pieces, when Mr. Douglas suddenly grasped the whole, exclaiming:

"The Union must and shall be preserved."

This immortal sentence was immediately telegraphed to all the papers in the United States and Canada, and



**Presidential Candidates of 1860**
**From Dr. C. W. Robach's Medical Almanac—1861**

procured the election of Mr. Douglas to the office of judge of good whiskey as soon as he arrived in Illinois. When about ten years old, he commenced writing for Harper's Magazine, and finally contributed a series of humorous articles to the editorial columns of the *Chicago Times.* Just before his election to the Senate last time, an exploit of his gave birth to this

### ANECDOTE

While Mr. Douglas and his gigantic opponent, Lincoln, were canvassing the State, they agreed to hold a debate at Quincy, and allow the people to decide which had the strongest claims to their votes. The meeting was a large one, and it did not take long for Douglas to get the better of the argument. Finding the battle going against him, Lincoln drew his form to his uttermost height, and looking down at the short figure of his rival, said very pompously:

"Mr. Douglas I cannot look at you without thinking of a passage of scripture."

"What is that?" asked our hero, good humoredly.

"'The way of the wicked is short,'" responded Lincoln, and fainted away.

The crowd applauded tremendously, and Douglas was not to be outdone. Waiting until Lincoln had revived, he quietly said:

"And you remind me, Mr. Lincoln, of another passage."

"What is that?" asked Lincoln.

"'How long! O, Lord, how long?'" responded Douglas. He was elected.

By way of concluding our biography, we give the following extract from one of Mr. Douglas' speeches.

* * * * Squatter Sovereignty, gentlemen, (Great Applause) is not the right of one man over another man, accorded by the Constitution; but the right of another man over this man, or that man over this man, where man is willing that man should be his own man, independent of every other man. This gentlemen, is squatter sovereignty, without mitigation." (Great enthusiasm.)

### LIFE OF JOHN BELL

#### By an intimate Acquaintance

The honorable John Bell was born on Mason and Dixie's land, of rich but pious parents, and was noted for his ringing voice. His extreme personal beauty suggested that delicious poem, in which the poet asks his friend, Brandon:

"Did you ever see the beautiful Bell, Brandon?"

He spent the earlier years of his life on a plantation, acquiring such fine cultivations, that his epistolary efforts are regarded with admiration by the whole world, and no man is considered a good scholar who is not familiar with Bell's letters. As Mr. Bell grew to manhood, he gradually eschewed all youthful society, and cultivated "old" gentlemen exclusively, and was noted for his venerable virtues. On one occasion, he won the friendship of a tea-total society of old maids, under the following circumstance: Being asked if he believed the use of tobacco to be injurious, he promptly replied:

"If tobacco is chewed in a certain way, it will do no harm to any one."

"How is that?" asked an antiquated Miss.

"It should be es-chewed," returned the eminent statesman.

In reference to Mr. Bell's public career, they tell the following

### ANECDOTE

As Mr. Bell was going from the Senate chamber to his hotel, after delivering his celebrated speech on the reopening of the slave trade, he was overtaken by a prominent politician from one of the Northern States, who salooted him with:

"I say, Bell, that was a good speech of yours; but you are always too solemn, and your friends have told you so often."

"Well," replied the Senator, "how can a Bell help sounding solemn when it is tolled so often."

Immediately after this the subject of our memoir was siezed with a severe fit of sickness; yet even that did not quench his spirit. When the doctor asked him how he felt one morning, he replied:

"Oh, I feel all sound, like any other Bell."

If Mr. Bell is elected to stay at home, he will adorn that position, and write for the *Ledger.*

### LIFE OF BRECKINRIDGE

#### By a Miner

The subject of our story was born on the day of his birth, on the Cincinnati platform, and is chiefly noted for his eloquent silence on all public occasions. Being of a fiery disposition, the Breckinridge coal was appropriately named after him; and it is a question with us whether he is the more noted as a duelist or a fuelist. We can say little more of him than he was born of Southern, but honest parents, and has acquired some fame as an artillerist by his management of the celebrated Buchanan, which will be discharged on the 4th of March next. Mr. Breckinridge is rather sharp in conversation, as is proved by the following

(Continued on page 4)

## "And so they buried Lincoln . . ."

At twenty-two minutes past seven o'clock, on the morning of April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died of a gunshot wound. At half past nine o'clock the same morning, the body was removed to the executive mansion and in the afternoon of the same day was embalmed and prepared for burial.

The preparation of the body was entrusted to the firm of Alexander and Brown of Washington, D. C. At the direction of Secretary of War Stanton the embalmer was forbidden to remove the discoloration of the eyes and upper part of the cheeks caused by the bullet wound which were to remain "as part of the history of the event."

Charles D. Brown, whom Lincoln had occasion in 1863 to call Dr. Brown, embalmed the body in the president's own room, in the presence of President Andrew Johnson, Generals Augur and Ruker, and the attending physicians who had so recently lost their distinguished patient.

Brown, according to The *New York Herald* of February 22, 1862, embalmed the body of Lincoln's own twelve year old son, Willie, who died February 20, 1862, According to the newspaper report this work was done in the presence of Doctors Stone and Hall, Senator Browning and Isaac Newton. The embalmer used the method of Sagnet (sometimes erroneously referred to as Succuet) of Paris, and the results were satisfactory. So satisfactory, that according to one source "the president had it twice disinterred to look upon it." If this assertion is true one can readily believe that the disinterment was at the request of the distracted wife and mother, Mary Todd Lincoln.

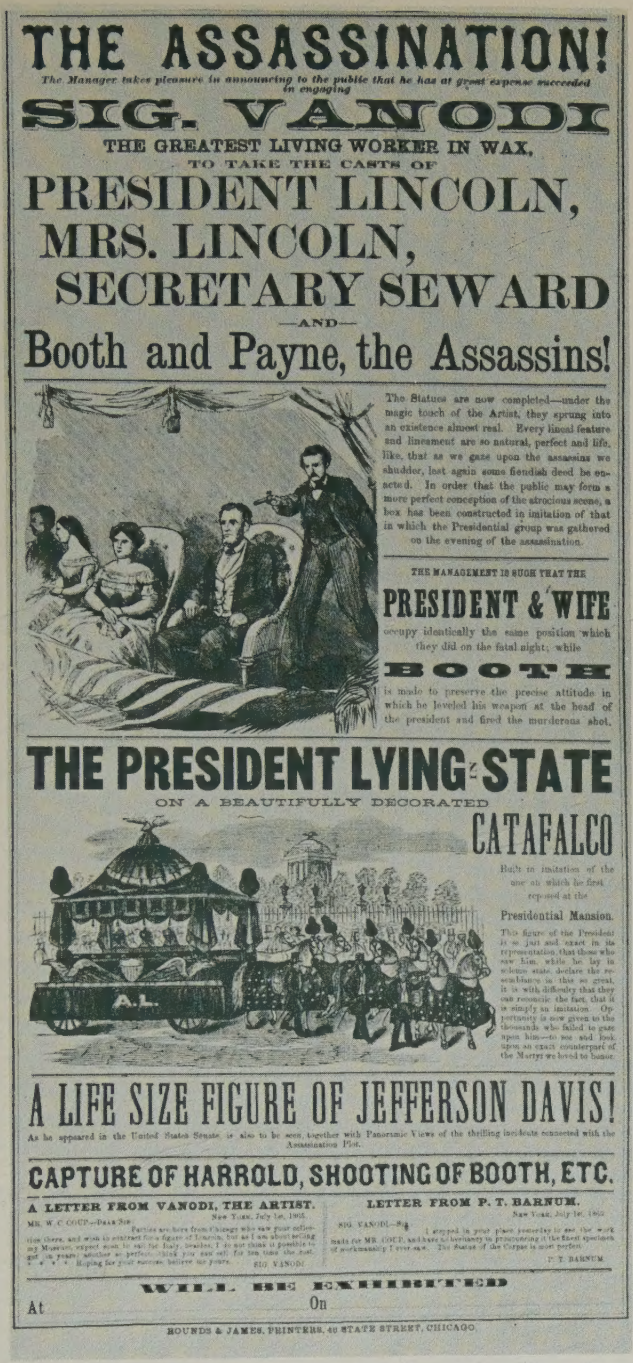
The skillful embalmer had a real problem in his efforts to preserve the body of the martyred president. He knew that the remains were certain to undergo prolonged and careful scrutiny and that weeks would pass before the casket could be sealed. Then, too, Stanton's order that the discoloration be retained hampered Brown's work, whose skillful training in the techniques of the restoration of life-like qualities was not in accord with the politician's desire to foster a feeling of resentment.

The *Chicago Tribune* of May 2, 1865 devoted quite a lot of space to a discussion of the remains of the dead president and to various embalming methods: "The President was neatly dressed in a suit of black. His face was somewhat discolored, as might have been expected from the character of his wound, but not more than we remember to have seen in cases of gunshot wounds. Otherwise his countenance exhibited an extremely natural and life-like appearance, more as if calmly slumbering, than in the cold embrace of death. It did not require a vivid imagination to discover a placid smile resting upon that marble face.

"Our readers are aware that the process of dissolution is arrested in this instance by embalming. The art is not a new one. It was extensively practiced by the ancient Egyptians, as is abundantly proved by the discovery of mummies in their sepulchers where they have lain for more than 3,000 years. In those ancient days, the viscera and brains were drawn from the body through natural outlets and the vacant places filled with spices, drugs, and balsams. The body was then washed and wrapped round from head to foot with bandages of fine linen, smeared over with gum. It was then placed in a wooden case and put in the sepulcher. Bitumen was also sometimes used in those days, but this was used only because of its cheapness.

"In later times, a method was employed by Dr. Chausier, which was followed with considerable success. The body, thoroughly emptied and washed in water, was kept constantly saturated with corrosive sublimate. The salt gradually combines with the flesh, gives it firmness, and preserves it, without change. The body becomes hard and brittle like marble.

"A process has been introduced in France, by G. N. Gannal, of injecting a concentrated solution of sulphate of alumina into the veins of the body, which is said to be very successful. Dr. Ure says that a solution of cloride of mercury and pyroligneous acid is also efficacious for similar purposes. He believes that the creosote contained in the acid was the substance most relied upon by the ancient Egyptains. Chloride of zinc, sulphate of zinc and sulphate of soda are also used.



THE ASSASSINATION!

The Manager takes pleasure in announcing to the public that he has at great expense succeeded in engaging

SIG. VANODI

THE GREATEST LIVING WORKER IN WAX,

TO TAKE THE CASTS OF

PRESIDENT LINCOLN,
MRS. LINCOLN,
SECRETARY SEWARD

—AND—

Booth and Payne, the Assassins!

The Statues are now completed—under the magic touch of the Artist, they sprung into an existence almost real. Every lineal feature and lineament are so natural, perfect and life, like, that as we gaze upon the assassins we shudder, lest again some fiendish deed be enacted. In order that the public may form a more perfect conception of the atrocious scene, a box has been constructed in imitation of that in which the Presidential group was gathered on the evening of the assassination.

THE MANAGEMENT IS SUCH THAT THE

PRESIDENT & WIFE

occupy identically the same position which they did on the fatal night; while

BOOTH

is made to preserve the precise attitude in which he leveled his weapon at the head of the president and fired the murderous shot.

THE PRESIDENT LYING IN STATE

ON A BEAUTIFULLY DECORATED

CATAFALCO

Built in imitation of the one on which he first reposed at the

Presidential Mansion.

This figure of the President is so just and exact in its representation, that those who saw him, while he lay in solemn state, declare the resemblance is this so great, it is with difficulty that they can reconcile the fact, that it is simply an imitation. Opportunity is now given to the thousands who failed to gaze upon him—to see and look upon an exact counterpart of the Martyr we loved to honor.

A LIFE SIZE FIGURE OF JEFFERSON DAVIS!

As he appeared in the United States Senate, is also to be seen, together with Panoramic Views of the thrilling incidents connected with the Assassination Plot.

CAPTURE OF HARROLD, SHOOTING OF BOOTH, ETC.

A LETTER FROM VANODI, THE ARTIST.

New York, July 1st, 1865.

MR. W. C. COUP—Dear Sir:

Parties are here from Chicago who saw your collection there, and wish to contract for a figure of Lincoln, but as I am about selling my Museum, expect soon to sail for Italy, (weather I go or not there is possible to get in yours) whether we perform or not, you can sell for ten times the cost.

Hoping for your success, believe me yours,

SIG. VANODI.

LETTER FROM P. T. BARNUM.

New York, July 1st, 1865.

SIG. VANODI—Sir:

I stopped in your place yesterday to see the work made for MR. COUP, and have deliberately to pronounce it the finest specimen of workmanship I ever saw. The Statue of the Corpse is most perfect.

P. T. BARNUM.

WILL BE EXHIBITED

At On

ROUNDS & JAMES, PRINTERS, 40 STATE STREET, CHICAGO.

**A portion of a broadside measuring 11" x 32", advertising the "Living Wonders & Gallery of Art" of COL. ORR'S GRAND MUSEUM which adjoined Yankee Robinson's Big Show. Aside from an American giant, some trained monkeys and a bearded lady, the wax figures of some of the principal characters of Lincoln's assassination were featured in the side show which likely played Peoria, Illinois in the late summer of 1865. This original broadside is in the Lincoln National Life Foundation.**

"The embalmer of the late President is Dr.- - - Brown, who holds the right for the United States from Prof. Succuet, of Paris. By this process, unlike that used by the Egyptians, nothing is removed from the body. The brain and viscera are left intact. The Doctor claims to be able absolutely to arrest the process of dissolution. He cannot restore a body to its life-like appearance before death, but he does claim to be able to preserve it in just the condition in which he receives it. What is the material used by the embalmer we are not informed; but whatever it is, the antiseptic fluid is injected into the carotid artery by means of a force pump. The effect of this substance is to make the body like marble. Dr. Brown informs our reporter that the body of the President will never know decay. After a time it will lose its marbleized appearance and become, to a certain extent, mummy-ized. It will not perceptibly change for several months."

Brown, assisted by Frank T. Sands, undertaker, accompanied Lincoln's remains from Washington, D. C. to Springfield, Illinois, and until the final funeral services were held on May 4, at which time interment was made in the receiving vault at the Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The embalmer, faithful in his duties and exhibiting a pride in his profession, refused to open the casket in the presence of others, after the remains had been covered in the casket during the many long journeys between the towns and cities of the funeral itinerary.

At Chicago an interesting incident occurred. While carpenters and decorators were busily engaged in preparing the rotunda of the court house for the funeral services, the casket was brought in and placed upon several chairs. Brown accompanied the remains and was preparing to open the casket in order to get the body ready for public view. A great many generals and prominent federal officials were in the rotunda directing operations. Once the casket was brought in many people gathered around to watch the undertaker at work. Brown, however, refused to open the casket until all had retired. All did eventually retire except General Ben Butler and he refused to move. Later he was persuaded to change his mind.

Brown did make one exception. He allowed Henry Lord Gray, the architect of the Chicago catafalque which was being rushed to completion, to witness the embalmer's restoration techniques. Gray later recalled: "I was left undisturbed and saw the face of Lincoln before the art of the embalmer was applied to restore the complection and the features. It was the work of half an hour when the transformation was complete."

But the destructive hand of death's decay was only temporarily arrested. According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 16 (1872), the casket was opened (September 19, 1871) under the direction of the Monument Association to certify to the actual presence of the body in the casket, and the embalment was declared a failure. The reporter stated that "the features of the deceased were scarcely discernible, the embalment seeming to have offered but little, if any resistance to the encrouchments of corruption, and the piece of clay that once lived and moved and talked, and was known as Abraham Lincoln is being fast dissolved, 'rafter after rafter, and beam from beam,' and the particles of which it was curiously compounded are rapidly returning to their original elements."

Undoubtedly, there was more marked deterioration in Lincoln's remains between the years 1865 and 1871, than at any other time.

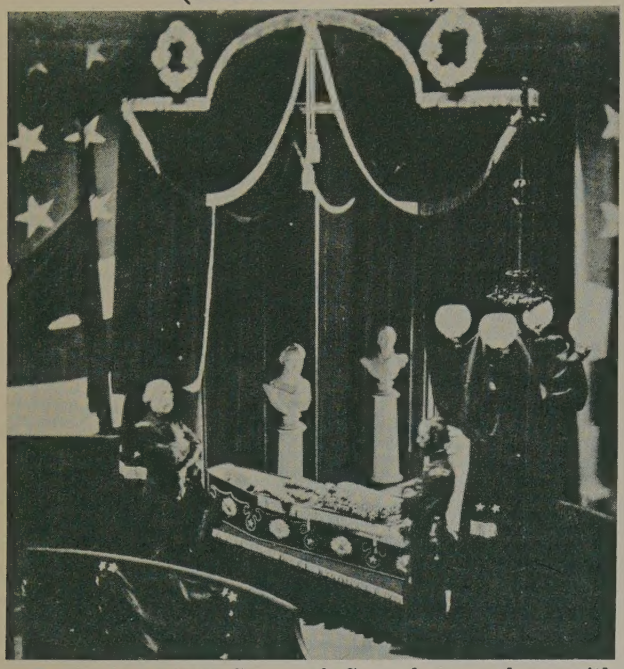
Lincoln's funeral is remembered by morticians as one that lasted thirty-six years; from April 15, 1865 to September 26, 1901. And, much to the credit of Dr. Brown (whose title was by courtesy or degree), the martyred president's embalming is considered one of the achievements of the art.

Lincoln's body was moved and viewed several times. The last time the coffin was opened was on September 26, 1901, to remove all doubt as to the location of the body. Then the remains were described as follows: "His sharp features were marked by the prominence of his angular nose and his stubby chin whiskers. Hair and beard were jet black and his skin a ruddy color more to be expected of a healthy tanned living person than one who had been buried 36 years." Other witnesses expressed more gruesome impressions which do not need to be repeated in this discourse.

The coffin of red cedar wood lined with lead and sealed with solder was again hermetically closed. Robert Lincoln, the president's son furnished a steel cage, three by three by eight feet long in which to place the coffin. A vault fifteen feet deep and eight feet long and eight feet wide was constructed. The bottom of the vault was laid four feet deep in cement, and on this cement floor was placed the steel cage containing the casket. Next the vault was filled with cement up to the level of the under side of the

(Continued on page 4)

## LINCOLN IN HIS COFFIN
## (Meserve No. 130)



On April 24, 1865 Gurney & Son, photographers, with the permission of the Common Council, made two photographs of Abraham Lincoln in his coffin while the remains lay in the New York City Hall.

The original photographs, a large one of which the dimensions are unknown and a smaller one measuring 4 x 4½ inches revealed, judging by the one extant, considerable detail. In the small photograph Admiral Charles H. Davis (left) and General Edward D. Townsend (right) were photographed standing at the head and foot of the casket. The white busts on pedestals were those of Jackson and Webster. In spite of heavy black drapery, which may have darkened the negative somewhat, the print reveals a discernible likeness of Lincoln's face.

The Lincoln family, it was claimed, strongly objected to the taking of photographs of the dead President because "the features of the corpse were shrunken, and had assumed a most unnatural expression."

It was believed at the time that Mrs. Lincoln directed Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton to have the negatives and prints destroyed. However, it is doubtful if Mrs. Lincoln ever knew of their existance. Nevertheless, Stanton carried out the so-called family order with his usual dispatch.

Jeremiah Gurney, Jr., who had devoted considerable time and labor to the project, surrendered the two negatives and prints. The large plate and print were destroyed and then Secretary Stanton was sent a print of the smaller negative. This he retained, but he ordered the smaller negative destroyed in spite of Gurney's protest.

Lewis Stanton, the son of the Secretary of War, later turned the print over to Nicolay and Hay in 1887 with the idea that it might be incorporated in their ten volume history. The print was not used and it was discovered in 1953 in the Nicolay Collection in the Illinois State Historical Library at Springfield, Illinois.

The following news item taken from the *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1865 which was copied from the *New York Evening Post* is at variance in some minor details, with the accepted accounts of the confiscation:

### DESTRUCTION OF THE NEGATIVES OF THE LATE PRESIDENT TAKEN IN NEW YORK

(From the New York Evening Post)

Two or three days since Major General Peck, in command of the Department of the East, received a peremptory order from Secretary Stanton to destroy the negatives and photographs of the late President, which had been made in New York. Captain Rives, of General Dix's staff, executed the order in part by seizing them. Before they could be destroyed, Mr. Gurney, who had taken them, waited on General Peck and asked to have the negatives preserved until he could appeal to Secretary Stanton, as he believed the order had been issued at the solicitation of rival artists. Much time and labor, he said, had been expended in taking the negatives, and it is highly desirable that they should be preserved.

General Peck acceded to the request, to await further instructions from Secretary Stanton, in the meantime retaining possession of the pictures. *This morning a telegram was received from Secretary Stanton by General Peck, directing the destruction of the negatives and the pictures.*

Mr. Stanton says Mrs. Lincoln and the other members of the family desire that this may be done; and he adds, *that permission should never have been given the artists to take the pictures. It was done by leave of the Committee of the Common Council.*

It is understood that the objection of the family and of the authorities to the publishing of the photographs arose mainly from the fact that the features of the corpse were shrunken, and had assumed a most unnatural expression. In this connection, however, it is proper to say that it was Mr. Gurney's intention to give the pictures an appearance as nearly as possible like that of portraits taken from life.

See: Meserve, Frederick Hill: The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln, Supplement Number Four. Privately printed, New York, 1955 No. 130, Page 6. Lorant, Stefan: Lincoln A Picture Story of His Life. Harper & Brothers. Page 229.

## PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

(Continued from page 2)

### ANECDOTE

In the rear of Mr. Breckinridge's private residence is a green sward on which is located a pen for hogs. One day, while he was standing by his pen (then empty) with a friend, watching the motions of a hog that was luxuriously rooting the sward just before them, one of the negroes came from the house and filled the trough of the pig-pen with swill. The hog heard the gush of the swill, and looked wistfully toward the pen, and then back at the place where he had been rooting, as though undecided what to do about it. Finally, however, the swill prevailed, and with a decisive grunt, he trotted toward the pen.

Turning to his friend, Mr. Breckinridge said:

"If that hog could speak, what line of Bulwer's drama of 'Richelieu' might he appropriately quote?"

The friend didn't know.

"Why, exclaimed Breckinridge, "He might truly say, 'the pen is mightier than the sward.' "

That night the friend died of measles.

*Cleveland Weekly Plain Dealer*
Wednesday, August 1, 1860

## BURIAL OF LINCOLN

(Continued from page 3)

tiled floor of the room. So the request of Robert Lincoln was carried out, the body being deposited in a block of cement eight feet by eight feet by fifteen feet and thus secured from further interference.

"You could not bury him although you slid
Upon his lap the Cheops pyramid
Or heaped it with the Rocky Mountain chain."

James T. McKay,
*Century Magazine*, February, 1890

## "SHALL LINCOLN HAVE A MONUMENT

"Fort Point, April 23d, 1865

"Editor Flag—Sir:—Allow me to ask shall the memory of the immortal Lincoln not be perpetuated in San Francisco by the erection of a monument? If I recollect rightly you referred to the top of Lone Mountain as a suitable place. Let me also suggest that a statue of the Martyred President should also be placed in the center of the plaza, opposite the City Hall. I am, dear sir, very faithfully

"A Soldier"

The above letter appearing in the Newspaper *Weekly American Flag*, San Francisco, on Saturday, April 29, 1865 is indicative of a spontaneous movement on the part of California citizens to memorialize Abraham Lincoln. San Francisco was the first city to erect a statue in honor of the martyred president. The dedication day was April 14, 1866. The plaster statue was the work of a sculptor named Pietro Mezzara, and was placed upon a pedestal in front of the new grammar school building at Fifth and Market Streets which had been named for Abraham Lincoln.

The Lincoln statue by Mezzara was destroyed in the great fire of 1906, but the soldier's suggestion that a Lincoln statue "should . . . be placed . . . opposite the City Hall" was carried out, oddly enough, with the dedication of Haig Patigian's heroic bronze Lincoln on February 12, 1928, in front of the City Hall in San Francisco's Civic Center.